

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ROME 13250

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: PERTINI: THE POLITICIAN

1. THE KEY TO PERTINI'S POLITICAL OUTLOOK IS HIS
UNSHAKABLE COMMITMENT TO LIBERTY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.
IT IS A DEVOTION WHICH HE HAS HAD SINCE AN EARLY AGE.
IT LED HIM INTO THE SOCIALIST PARTY. IT MADE HIM
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ONE OF THE FEW AUTHENTIC OPPONENTS OF FASCISM. IT
MOTIVATED WHATER HE HAS DONE SINCE 1945. AND IT
WAS THE MAJOR THEME OF HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS WHEN
HE DECLARED, "OF COURSE, WE HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED
FREEDOM A VALUABLE, INALIENABLE BLESSING. WE THREW
ALL OUR YOUTH INTO THIS STRUGGLE, WITHOUT MINDING
HARDSHIPS, TO REGAIN OUR LOST LIBERTY. BUT, IF

SOMEONE OFFERED ME, WHO HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SOCIALIST, THE MOST RADICAL SOCIAL REFORM AT THE EXPENSE OF FREEDOM, I WOULD REFUSE BECAUSE FREEDOM MUST NEVER BE BARTERED AWAY."

2. PERTINI NEVER HAD ANY PREDILECTION FOR POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY. BY TEMPERAMENT HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN PRAGMATIC RATHER THAN DOCTRINAIRE, REFORMIST RATHER THAN REVOLUTIONARY, MODERATE RATHER THAN MILLENIAL. TO HIM THE END WOULD NOT JUSTIFY THE MEANS; TO HIM A POLITICAL PARTY IS A FALLIBLE INSTRUMENT FOR ACHIEVING CERTAIN TANGIBLE GOALS RATHER THAN A GOOD IN ITSELF. HE HAS LITTLE OR NO CLASS FEELING AND INSISTS THAT HIS CONCEPT OF THE WORKING CLASS INCLUDES THE MIDDLE CLASS. THIS APPROACH ACCOUNTS FOR THE STRANGE FACT THAT ALTHOUGH A MARXIST AND DESPITE A CLOSENESS TO GRAMSCI AND OTHER COMMUNISTS DURING THE FASCIST ERA, PERTINI IS MUCH MORE IN THE ENGLISH SOCIALIST AND RADICAL MOLD THAN AN AFFILIATE OF CONTINENTAL MARXISM, HAS INFINITELY MORE IN COMMON WITH R. H. TAWNEY, BERTRAND RUSSELL AND LEONARD WOOLF THAN WITH MARX, ENGELS OR GRAMSCI. ALL OF GRAMSCI'S INTELLECTUAL WRESTLING WITH THE NOTION OF THE HEGEMONY OF THE PROLETARIAT, FOR INSTANCE, WAS COMPLETELY FOREIGN TO PERTINI, WHOSE CONCEPT OF SOCIALISM HAS ALWAYS BEEN EXACTLY THE SAME AS TAWNEY'S--SOCIALISM AS

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FELLOWSHIP, AS FRATERNITY AMONG FREE AND EQUAL INDIVIDUALS.

3. PERTINI HAS NEVER WAVERED IN HIS VIEW THAT THE BEST WAY OF ADVANCING LIBERTY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE WAS THROUGH THE SOCIALIST PARTY. HE JOINED IT IN 1918 AND REMAINED WITH IT, DESPITE ALL THE SCHISMS AND PROBLEMS AND CHANGES OF COURSE WHICH THE PARTY HAS UNDERGONE IN THE PAST HALF CENTURY. TO COMPREHEND PERTINI'S POLITICAL APPROACH IT IS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTAND ABOVE ALL THAT HE CONSIDERS THE UNITY AND AUTONOMY OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY SUPREMELY IMPORTANT. THIS FACT EXPLAINS WHY ON THE ONE HAND HE WAS ONE OF THE FEW SOCIALIST LEADERS TO FIGHT WITH ALL HIS MIGHT BOTH IN 1947 AND IN 1969 TO PREVENT SARAGAT AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS FROM SECEDING FROM THE PARENT PARTY AND WHY ON THE OTHER HE WANTED THE COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS TO MARCH SIDE BY SIDE BUT ALWAYS ON SEPARATE COURSES.

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4. YET PERTINI HAS NEVER BEEN EITHER COMFORTABLE
IN THE PARTY OR COMFORTABLE FOR THE PARTY. IN 1945
HE SERVED ON A TRANSITIONAL BASIS AS PARTY SECRETARY.
AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS HE WAS REPLACED BY NENNI, THE PARTY'S
COMMANDING FIGURE. PERTINI FELT HE HAD BEEN CHEATED
OF THE LEADERSHIP AND FEUDED WITH NENNI EVER AFTER.
BEING A INDEPENDENT SPIRIT ANYWAY, PERTINI NEVER
HESITATED TO DIFFER ON PARTY POLICY. THE MOST NOTABLE
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OF THESE DISAGREEMENTS WAS OVER NENNI'S DISASTROUS
DECISION TO GO INTO THE 1948 NATIONAL ELECTION WITH

JOINT SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST ELECTOR LISTS. BUT HE NEVER DISSENTED FOR DISSENT'S OWN SAKE AND HE SUPPORTED THE PARTY'S OTHER POSTWAR POSITIONS-- OPPOSING NATO, RE-ARMAMENT, EUROPEAN UNIFICATION, AND SO ON. NOR DID HE INTRIGUE AGAINST THE PARTY LEADERSHIP. FOR A TIME HE HAD HIS OWN FACTION BUT IT RARELY INCLUDED ANYONE OTHER THAN HIMSELF. HE LOATHED THE PARTY'S FACTIONALISM AND NEVER WANTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO IT OR OTHERWISE DIVIDE THE PARTY.

5. INSTEAD PERTINI WITHDREW MORE AND MORE INTO SPLENDID ISOLATION; ALWAYS SOMEWHAT ABOVE THE PARTY'S QUARRELS, HE INVARIABLY OCCUPIED A POSITION IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PARTY. THE POINT IS THAT PERTINI FOLLOWED A BROADLY CONSISTENT COURSE WHILE NENNI (AND THE PARTY AS A WHOLE) SHIFTED FROM ONE EXTREME--ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS--TO THE OTHER--ALLIANCE WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. FOR THIS REASON IT IS INCORRECT TO CONSIDER PERTINI A "LEFT SOCIALIST". YET IT IS AT THE SAME TIME TRUE THAT WHILE PERTINI FOLLOWED HIS PARTY IN ITS RIGHTWARD DRIFT AFTER 1956, HE WAS SLOW IN ADJUSTING AND IT TOOK HIM TIME TO CATCH UP. BUT WHEN NENNI LED HIS PARTY INTO A CENTER-LEFT COALITION, PERTINI BACKED HIM.

6. PERTINI HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIGHLY POPULAR WITH PARTY WORKERS AND THE SOCIALIST GRASS ROOTS. HE HAD A ROUSING RECEPTION AT THE 1976 PARTY CONGRESS, THE LAST AT WHICH HE APPEARED. ALTHOUGH HE HELD HIGH POSITIONS FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE PARTY--HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE DIRECTORATE FROM 1945 TO 1948 AND FROM 1949 TO 1955 AND A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMITTEE FOR TEN YEARS AFTER 1953--HE WAS MORE ACTIVE IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, BECOMING A VICE PRESIDENT IN 1963 AND PRESIDENT IN 1968.

7. PERTINI'S TROUBLED RELATIONS WITH HIS PARTY'S LEADERSHIP CONTINUE TO THIS DAY. RECENTLY HE OPPOSED CRAXI'S ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH THE RED BRIGADES TO SECURE MORO'S RELEASE. EVEN MORE RECENTLY IT WAS GIOLITTI, NOT HE, WAS HIS OWN PARTY'S FIRST CHOICE AS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, AND PERTINI KNOWS THAT CRAXI PRESSED HIS CANDIDACY AT THE CRITICAL JUNCTURE ONLY TO PREVENT SOMEONE LESS DESIRABLE TO THE SOCIALISTS FROM WINNING THE ELECTION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MANCINI IS THE ONLY PARTY LEADER WITH WHOM PERTINI HAS A RELATIONSHIP OF CONFIDENCE. GENNARO ACQUAVIVA, THE PARTY'S EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENT TO THE EMBASSY A FEW DAYS AGO: "PERTINI HAS CONSTANTLY

FOUGHT WITH THE PARTY, AND THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN BAD BLOOD BETWEEN HIM AND THE LEADERSHIP. AFTER HE WAS REPLACED BY INGRAO AS CHAMBER PRESIDENT, THE PARTY GAVE HIM NO SPECIAL RECOGNITION OR NEW POSITION. HE FELT THE PARTY HAD DROPPED HIM AND HE HAS BEEN VERY BITTER. HIS RELATIONS WITH CRAXI ARE NOT GOOD. CRAXI IS NENNI'S PROTEGE AND PERTINI REGARDS ANDY FRIENDS OF NENNI AS HIS OWN ENEMY. CRAXI AND PERTINI ARE NOT ON FRIENDLY TERMS." ACQUAVIVA THEN ADDED THE FOLLOWING STARTLING STATEMENT: "PERTINI IS CLOSER TO AMENDOLA THAN CRAXI, CLOSER TO LONGO THAN TO NENNI. THESE COMMUNISTS, CAMRADES OF THE RESISTANCE, ARE VERY CLOSE TO HIM AND HAVE INFLUENCE ON HIM." THE VERACITY OF THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN CONFIRMED TO US BY PERTINI'S CLOSE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FRIEND, PIETRO LONGO.

8. WHAT IS PERTINI'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY? TWO PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS MUST BE KEPT IN MIND TRYING TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION. FIRST,
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PERTINI HAS HAD A RESIDUAL ADMIRATION AND SYMPATHY

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FOR COMMUNISTS BECAUSE OF THEIR OPPOSITION
TO THE FASCIST STATE. AS HE SAID TO FALLACI, 90 PERCENT
OF THE ANTI-FASCIST RESISTERS WERE COMMUNIST. PERTINI'S
ATTITUDE IS A SIMPLE HISTORIC AND EMOTIONAL CONSIDERA-
TION THAT WILL NOT CHANGE. SECOND, PERTINI WAS--
LIKE NENNI--CONVINCED AT THE END OF THE WAR THAT THE
FASCISTS HAD BEEN ABLE TO SEIZE POWER IN 1922 BECAUSE
THE WORKING CLASS HAD BEEN DIVIDED. AND HE--LIKE
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NENNI--SWORE NEVER AGAIN TO LET THE WORKING CLASS FORCES
BE POLITICALLY SPLIT. IN POLITICAL TERMS THIS MEANT
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES;
IT MEANT A POPULAR FRONT. IN THEIR VIEW THE SOCIALIST
PARTY HAD NOTHING TO FEAR FROM AN ALLIANCE WITH THE
COMMUNISTS BUT WOULD, ON THE CONTRARY, BE ABLE TO SEIZE
THE LEADERSHIP IN SUCH AN ALLIANCE. EVEN SO, TO PERTINI--
UNLIKE NENNI--COOPERATION DID NOT MEAN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE OR
ANY COMPROMISE OF THE PAGTFKYS AUTONOMY.

9. FOR OVER TEN YEARS AFTER THE WAR, PERTINI WAS
FULLY IN ACCORD WITH THE PARTY LEADERSHIP IN FAVORING
UNITY OF ACTION BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST
PARTIES. THOUGH NENNI ABANDONED THIS COURSE AFTER
THE HUNGARIAN INVASION, PERTINI HELD TO IT FOR A FEW
YEARS LONGER, DESPITE HIS OPPOSITION TO THE SOVIET
INVASION. THE ESSENCE OF HIS TACTICAL APPROACH WAS
ALWAYS COOPERATION BUT SEPARATION. AS AN ARTICLE
IN THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW FOR JUNE 1962
POINTED OUT, PERTINI WAS ONE OF THE SOCIALISTS
WHO AT THAT TIME "FOR SENTIMENTAL REASONS, COULD
NOT BEAR THE THOUGHT OF ENDING THE LONG-STANDING
FRIENDSHIP WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY."

IN TERMS OF SUBSTANCE, PERTINI'S POLITICAL
CREDO PLACES AN INSUPERABLE BARRIER BETWEEN HIM AND
THE COMMUNIST PARTY. PIETRO LONGO AND ACQUAVIVA

HAVE STATED TO US THAT THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT
PERTINI WAS NEVER ANYTHING OTHER THAN A CONVINCED
SOCIALIST. THEY NOTE THAT HIS RELATIONSHIP TO
AMENDOLA AND LUIGI LONGO GROWS OUT OF THE PAST AND HAS
ALWAYS BEEN COMPLETELY ABOVEBOARD. PERTINI HIMSELF
HAS BEEN PUBLICLY CRITICAL OF THE RIGID DISCIPLINE
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OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AS INCONSISTENT WITH DEMOCRACY.
PERTINI'S DEDICATION TO LIBERTY AND SOCIAL REFORM HAS
GIVEN HIM SOME SYMPATHY FOR ANOTHER POLITICAL PARTY, THE RADICALS,
WHICH FOR THEIR PART SUPPORTED HIS CANDIDACY FROM THE
MOMENT IT WAS ANNOUNCED. PERTINI'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE
RADICALS IS INSTRUCTIVE BECAUSE IT EXEMPLIFIES THE FACT
THAT HE CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED IN AMERICAN TERMS AS SOMEONE
OF STAUNCHLY LIBERAL PRINCIPLES.

10. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, PERTINI REGARDS IN
THE POSTWAR CONTEXT AS A FORCE FOR STRONG CONSERVATISM,
IN SOME WAYS FOR REACTION. IN HIS INTERVIEW WITH FALLACI,
HE SAID, "IN 1947 DE GASPARI DROPPED THE SOCIALISTS
FROM THE GOVERNMENT...AND MADE A CLEAN SWEEP OF THE
ANTI-FASCISTS WHOM WE PUT IN THE PREFECTURES, FOR
EXAMPLE IN THE POLICE. SLOWLY, SLOWLY THE CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT IN ROME REMOVED THEM. AND IT RESTORED
THE OLD APPARATUS, AND WE COULD NOT STOP IT."

11. AS A POLITICIAN, PERTINI IS NOT THE BABE-IN-
THE-WOODS WHICH SOME TAKE HIM FOR AND WHICH HE HIMSELF
RATHER AFFECTS TO BE. NOR IS HE AS LACKING IN AMBITION
AS HE HAS APPEARED. ACCORDING TO PIETRO LONGO, "CONTRARY
TO APPEARANCES, PERTINI IS A GREAT CALCULATOR; HE IS
A GOOD, ASTUTE AND CLEVER POLITICAL FIGURE. HE
IS BETTER ABLE TO MANIPULATE THAN MANY PEOPLE THINK."

12. PERTINI'S ONLY HIGH POSITION PRIOR TO HIS ELECTION
AS PRESIDENT WAS THE PRESIDENCY OF THE CHAMBER. BY
ALL ACCOUNTS HE WAS EXCELLENT IN THE JOB. HE WAS SCRUPULOUSLY
FAIR AND HONEST AND HE ENJOYED THE RESPECT AND AFFECTION
OF THE ENTIRE CHAMBER. AS PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER HE
PRESIDED OVER THE PREVIOUS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND
ROSE IN POPULAR ESTEEM FOR THE OUTSTANDING WAY HE
CONDUCTED THOSE DIFFICULT SESSIONS. GARDNER

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